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Earned Income Tax Credit Can Mean a Fat Refund for Washington Workers

OLYMPIA – Washington state is providing free resources to help families take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit, which can equal a fat refund, a cut in income taxes, or bigger paychecks for workers with low and moderate incomes.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) can put up to \$4,200 in the pockets of those with incomes up to nearly \$35,000. Families can get it even if they owe no taxes. But to cash in, they have to claim it.

The state has set up a toll-free hotline to provide information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). It is also promoting free online tax filing for families that qualify for the EITC, enabling them to get quicker returns.

“The people of Washington work hard and they should keep as much of those earnings as possible to provide for themselves and their families,” Gov. Gary Locke said. “We are very excited this year to be able to offer people an easy way to file for the Earned Income Tax Credit at the state’s WorkSource centers.”

“The online service is easy, fast and is provided in both English and Spanish. Workers only get the EITC if they apply – making it a top priority for the state to promote the availability of the tax credit and assist families in applying for their refunds,” Locke said.

As in past years, the Employment Security Department has set up a toll-free hotline to answer questions about the EITC and direct callers to free tax assistance sites and WorkSource centers. Hotline staff can also answer questions about the Child Tax Credit, which can save families up to \$1,000 per child.

The hotline number is 1-800-755-5317. Calls are answered 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Hearing impaired persons can call 1-800-844-6388 for TDD/TYY.

The WorkSource Web site at www.go2worksource.com includes a link to free Web-based software program called I-CAN! that helps low-income workers electronically prepare taxes. The program is administered by the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, Calif. Forms can be printed at WorkSource centers and mailed to the Internal Revenue Service.

The state is also reaching out to low-wage families, employers, and community organizations through phone calls and direct mail to inform them about the tax credits.

A married couple with two children and a combined income of up to \$34,692 can qualify for the EITC. So can a single person with one child who earns up to \$29,666. Kids aren’t required, though; a single person with no children who earns up to \$11,230 can benefit.

(more)

The amount of the tax credit depends on family size and gross income. Here's a look at how the EITC can benefit minimum-wage workers:

- A single parent of two children who works full-time may get \$4,026 – or a 28 percent boost to annual income.
- A single parent working part-time with one child may get \$2,474 – the equivalent of four months of earnings.
- A married couple where one parent works full-time and the other part-time, may get \$2,489 if they have two children or \$1,125 for one child.
- A single person with no children who works part-time may get \$303.

Taxpayers who expect to qualify for the EITC and have at least one qualifying child can choose to receive part of the credit in each paycheck, rather than an annual refund.

More information about the EITC is available on the WorkFirst Web site at www.workfirst.wa.gov and from the Internal Revenue Service at www.irs.gov.

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